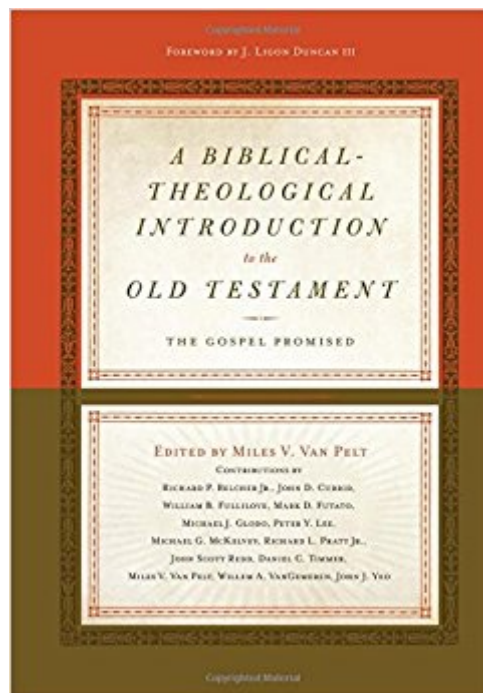


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A Biblical-Theological Introduction To The Old Testament: The Gospel Promised



Synopsis

Read the Old Testament from a biblical-theological perspective. Featuring contributions from thirteen respected evangelical scholars, this gospel-centered introduction to the Old Testament will help anyone who teaches or studies Scripture to better see the initial outworking of God's plan to redeem the world through Jesus Christ.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"For expository preachers and teachers of the Bible, this is truly a gold mine. Present and past members of the Reformed Theological Seminary faculty have produced a volume that is long overdue. Sound biblical-theological treatments of each book of the Old Testament, linked with good historical and literary comments, all conclude by pointing to the fulfillment of the texts in the person and work of Jesus. With this volume, no preacher should ever feel that preaching Christ from the Old Testament is too hard or too speculative." —Graeme Goldsworthy, former lecturer in Old Testament, biblical theology, and hermeneutics, Moore Theological College

"For many Christians, the Old Testament is like a thousand pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Where do you start? It helps to look at the box top and see how it all fits together. That's what these superb teachers of the church do in this insightful book." —Michael Horton, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Seminary California; author, *Core Christianity: Finding Yourself in God's Story*

"In this volume, a number of capable biblical scholars faithfully explore the Old

Testament writings with sensitivity and sensibility. They do an admirable job not simply in describing the main themes and theology of each book but also in artfully showing that the Old Testament has a covenantal framework, a kingdom perspective, and Christ at its center. In brief, this is a superb volume, which provides an understandable and informative overview of the Old Testament. A great antidote to an embarrassing ignorance of the Old Testament by Christians.

—•Michael F. Bird, Lecturer in Theology, Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia; author, *An Evangelical Theology*

—“The purpose of this work, *is* to show how the vast, eclectic diversity of the Scriptures has been woven together by a single, divine Author over the course of a millennium as the covenantal testimony to the person and work of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit according to the eternal decree of God the Father, *is* grand in itself. Yet more noble still is the pursuit of that goal through the combined efforts of a great faculty who are honoring the fifty-year legacy of a blessed institution steadfastly committed to the inerrancy of God’s Word and the historic distinctives of the Christian faith.

—•Bryan Chapell, President Emeritus, Covenant Theological Seminary; *Senior Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois*

—“A high regard for Scripture as the authoritative Word of God percolates through every chapter of this collection. Moreover, it repeatedly displays flashes of insight into the redemptive-historical outworking of God’s salvation plan for his people. You may not agree with the position of every author, but you will be challenged to seriously consider each carefully crafted essay, all of which are written at a very accessible level. The book achieves an excellent tone in its awareness of the many difficult questions that an honest reading of the Old Testament introduces. These contributors are also sensitive to canonical and literary concerns. Finally, this volume even includes teaching on the *prophetic* idiom, *and if you don’t know what that is, then take up and read!* I’m so glad that Van Pelt has gathered such an able band of brothers to produce this fine book.

—•Bryan D. Estelle, Professor of Old Testament, Westminster Seminary California; author, *Salvation Through Judgment and Mercy: The Gospel According to Jonah*

—“Van Pelt and his colleagues offer every worshiper of Christ a means of drawing out the one story of the King and his kingdom as it runs through the Law and the Prophets. Their analyses of the individual books of the Old Testament reveal the beauty of the whole canon. A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament is intellectually enriching and pastorally faithful, helping the church to grow in love for the Savior through reading the Hebrew Bible. Congregants and Bible students will find great joy in reading their Scriptures with the aid of this work!

—•Eric C. Redmond, *Assistant Professor of Bible, Moody Bible Institute; Pastor of Adult Ministries, Calvary Memorial Church, Oak Park, Illinois*

Miles V. Van Pelt (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the Alan Belcher Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages, academic dean, and director of the Summer Institute for Biblical Languages at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. He also serves on the pastoral staff of Grace Reformed Church in Madison, Mississippi. He and his wife, Laurie, have four children.

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Wonderful book.

Excellent reference

I have owned or own numerous single volume or collected sets of introductions to the Bible. Some have been quite helpful in my studies, personal or academic, and others have been shall we say a bit lackluster and somewhat disappointing. Given the plethora of biblical introduction style commentaries that have made their way in and out of the market, I am always interested to see what a new addition has to offer, if anything, to the discussion. Recently, two such additions made their way to the new release offerings and I figured why not take a look. These new releases are A

Biblical-Theological Introduction the Old Testament and A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament edited by Miles Van Pelt and Michael Kruger respectively with contributions from numerous heavyweights in Old and New Testament scholarship. With an admitted bit of skepticism which I typically have with books of this type, I dug into the material. Let me just say my original attitude of skepticism was very quickly replaced with appreciation for the excellent work provided by the contributors. For starters, these are not minor contributions to the biblical introduction category of study. At over 1200 pages combined, they contain serious scholarship. Now mind you mere size does not determine the quality of scholarship as an author or editor can include a lot of fluff, big words, and concepts that are of no use or that are quite frankly wholly incorrect. One will not find useless fluff and incorrect biblical theology in these efforts. This is serious, quality, purposeful, and important biblical scholarship. Additionally, these are gospel focused texts. I realize the term "gospel-(insert word)" is a popular title these days and is often just that, namely just a set of words that carries little if any meaning. When I state these texts are gospel focused, it means they actually use as a start and end point the message of the gospel as expressed in the front and back halves of Scripture. An example of the focus on the gospel found in these helpful biblical introductions and more specifically the reality that the core message of Scripture is the promise, coming, and future return of or Redeemer can be observed in the introduction of the Old Testament volume: "Jesus is the theological center of the Old Testament. This means that the person and work of Jesus as presented in the New Testament (including his birth, life, teachings, death, resurrection, ascension, and return) constitute the singular reality that unifies and explains everything that appears in the Old Testament. Far too often the Old Testament is skimmed over in an effort to skip right to the Gospels or writings of Paul. Without establishing the foundation found in the front of Scripture and recognizing the connectedness of the whole of Scripture as it relays the message of redemption, understanding Scripture's coherent and unified message will be difficult if not impossible. The contributors do not fall prey to the temptation to spit apart as unrelated the Old and New Testament texts. Conversely, they aptly outline for the reader a sound biblical, gospel-centric approach. Each book of the Bible is engaged with the all-important elements of background information, authorship, literary analysis, structure and outline, message and theology, with any relevant major themes of each book receiving in-depth discussion. Something I am always appreciative of are helpful bibliographies. Okay, call me a book nerd, but I am a stickler for authors both referencing the work of other scholars and providing helpful tools for further study. At the end of each book of the Bible that is engaged in these volumes the reader will find a great list of resources.

Also provided are some very interesting appendices that discuss anything from Daniel's 70 weeks to New Testament Textual Criticism. To put it simply, these are excellent works that I encourage not just seminary students and pastors to consider purchasing. It would be a shame if these books only found their way to the shelves of the academic minded individuals. They are truly useful for the average laymen as well in their study of Scripture. In fact, I recommend splurging a little and purchasing both volumes as a set. You will not be disappointed and I submit you will greatly appreciate the amount of sound scholarship provided and more importantly, I am confident you will grow in your knowledge of Scripture and in your relationship with God as a result using these helpful tools as part of your Bible study repertoire. I received these books for free from Crossway Books and the opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Christ. Kingdom. Unity. These three words summarize the Christian worldview regarding the message of Scripture. Christ is the central figure of Scripture who accomplished redemption and to whom the Old and New Testaments point to. The kingdom is the "thematic framework" in which Christ the redeemer operates and to which every other theme of the Bible is tied to. Unity describes how Christ and kingdom are presented from Genesis to Revelation. Rather than each book standing on its own, disjointed from the others, and Christ and kingdom being haphazardly presented in Scripture, each theme is coherently and consistently presented in the sixty-six books of the Bible. It is around these three themes that A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised and A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized have been written (Crossway, 2016). These two books are the product of professors, past and present, at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi and are edited by Miles V. Van Pelt (OT) and Michael J. Kruger (NT). In short, these two volumes provide lay Christians, seminary students, and pastors with possibly the best biblical and theological introduction to all 66 books of the Bible from a decidedly Reformed perspective. There are several reasons why these books ought to be on your shelf. First, these books accomplish the goal of presenting the overall biblical messages of Christ and his kingdom through the unity of Scripture. The authors do not take the higher critical road by fragmenting and juxtaposing the books of the Bible to each other. Rather, they see Scripture, as it presents itself; a unified whole with each book contributing to the overall themes, namely, Christ and

kingdom. There is unity in the diversity. As Miles Van Pelt states in the preface to the Old Testament volume Our goal is not to dismantle the Scriptures into as many unrelated parts as possible but rather to show how the vast, eclectic diversity of the Scriptures has been woven together by a single, divine author over the course of a millennium as the covenantal testimony to the person and word of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit according to the eternal decree of God the Father. (13, BTIOT). Michael J. Kruger says as much in his introduction to the New Testament volume Because God is the ultimate author of the New Testament writings, the distinctive theologies of individual books and the overall theology of the New Testament are fully harmonious. (23, BTINT) Second, tying the themes of Christ and unity together, these books focus mainly (though not to the exclusion of traditional systematic theology categories) on the redemptive-historical nature of Scripture. If there were no unity to the books of the Bible we would be hard pressed to find overarching themes and a redemptive-historical focus might be impossible to argue. Much like reading the Bible straight through itself, reading these two volumes straight through will give the reader an amazing grasp on every book of the Bible in terms of its overall content, biblical context, and theological focus. If you need to read another book in order to be convinced of the redemptive-historical narrative of Scripture then this is one to get. Third, tied to the second feature, each book is presented in its biblical-theological context. While some contributors do more or less than others on which aspect they focus more on, each chapter discusses how each book of the Bible fits into the overall message of Scripture (biblical) and what each book of the Bible uniquely contributes theologically (theological). This combination gives the reader a more balanced and broad understanding of each book of the Bible. Fourth, as it relates to the Old Testament, they have taken the position to present the books in the order as they appear in final form in the Hebrew Bible. Van Pelt takes a few pages to discuss the history and rationale for the varied ways the OT books have been ordered. Many Christians are not aware that there is more than one way the books of the Old Testament have been ordered depending on the text being used. In his chapter The Twelve, Daniel C. Timmer discusses the varied ways in which the minor prophets have been ordered. For some very enlightening discussion on why Proverbs, Ruth, and Song of Songs are in that order see Van Pelt's chapter Song of Songs (419-20). Finally, these books are highly accessible to the average Christian who knows their Bible fairly well and provide great content for pastors and teachers to help their congregations go deep into the text. Though the contributors are scholars, most of whom are ordained ministers and many of whom have pastoral experience, their scholarly experience has not prohibited them from producing a highly readable and accessible text. Their diversity of education and ministry experience is brought into these books and makes them

that much better. This will probably be the standard biblical-theological introduction to the Bible from a Reformed perspective (or from any perspective for that matter) for years to come. I cannot recommend *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* and *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* enough. These are solid, conservative, theological, biblical, and informed books that will help Christians better understand the broader message(s) of the Bible (Christ, kingdom, unity) as well as the many sub themes that play out in the text. These are two books that should be standard texts for pastors and teachers and any Christian who desires to know the Bible better. I received this book for free from Crossway for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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